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REMARKS**INTRODUCTION**

In accordance with the foregoing, claim 6 has been cancelled without prejudice and claims 2-5 and 10-12 have been amended. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

Claims 2-5, 7-8, and 10-13 are pending and under consideration. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §101

In the outstanding Office Action at page 2, numbered item 3, claims 10-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as being unsupported by either a credible asserted utility or a well established utility. This rejection is traversed and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 10-12 have been amended to remove the phrase "user-status candidates defined..." which was asserted to be unsupported by the Specification. Claim 10 now recites, in relevant part, "storing a plurality of user status selection tables including user status options from which a user selects his/her own status for each virtual space." Claims 11 and 12 have been similarly amended. In view of the amendments to claims 10-12, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112

In the outstanding Office Action at page 2, numbered item 4, claims 10-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112; first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. This rejection is traversed and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 10-12 have been amended to remove the phrase "user-status candidates defined..." which was asserted to be unsupported by the Specification. Claim 10 now recites, in relevant part, "storing a plurality of user status selection tables including user status options from which a user selects his/her own status for each virtual space." Claims 11 and 12 have been similarly amended. In view of the amendments to claims 10-12, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

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DOUBLE PATENTING

In the outstanding Office Action at page 3, numbered item 5, claims 2-8 and 10-13 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of double patenting over claims 1-20 of U.S. Patent No. 6,735,615. The rejection is traversed and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Office Action asserts that "Both inventions disclose a Chat system monitors, notifies (i.e.: message string or notification) and displays the changed of status table to the user." Applicants respectfully disagree.

U.S. Patent No. 6,735,615 teaches an invention to detect a change in a status table, such as a database, and to notify terminals participating in a virtual space in a chat system of the detected change. According to the present invention, in contrast to U.S. Patent No. 6,735,615, a status selection table is provided which can be set for each virtual space, and a different status for each virtual space can be set for one user, and notification of status changes can be made to virtual spaces. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that U.S. Patent No. 6,735,615 and the present invention are not the same invention.

Further, at page 3, the Office Action states that "there is no apparent reason why applicant was prevented from presenting claims corresponding to those of the instant application during prosecution of the application which matured into a patent," and cites *In re Schneller*, 397 F.2d 350, 158 USPQ 210 (CCPA 1968). Applicants note that MPEP 804 acknowledges that "Nonstatutory double patenting rejections based on *Schneller* will be rare." Further, MPEP 804 states that "The Technology Center (TC) Director must approve any nonstatutory double patenting rejections based on *Schneller*. Applicants respectfully submit that the outstanding Office Action does not indicate that the Technology Center Director has approved this nonstatutory double patenting rejection. Form paragraph 8.38, used in the outstanding Office Action, "should only be used where approval from the TC Director to make a nonstatutory double patenting rejection based on *In re Schneller* has been obtained." Form paragraph 8.38, Examiner Note 1. As this rejection does not appear to be approved by the Technology Center Director, Applicants respectfully request that it be withdrawn.

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REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102

In the outstanding Office Action at pages 4-7, numbered items 6-15, claims 2-8 and 10-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,564,261 to Gudjonsson, et al. Of the rejected claims, claim 6 has been cancelled. This rejection is traversed and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Independent claim 10 has been amended to recite "storing a plurality of user-status-selection tables including user status options from which a user selects his/her own status for each virtual space." Amended independent claims 11 and 12 have been similarly amended. In a non-limiting example, according to the present invention, a user-status-selection table stores settable status selection. A presence managing table, in contrast, stores a set status.

In the Office Action at pages 4-5, numbered item 6, Gudjonsson, et al. is asserted to teach all of the features of amended independent claim 10. Applicants respectfully disagree. Col. 3, lines 37-46 of Gudjonsson, et al., which were cited by the Examiner, teaches a method in which a user can find out the status of "buddies" using a buddy list or contact list, and others are notified of a user's status when the user sets his or her status. Gudjonsson, et al. at col. 12, lines 42-54, which was asserted to teach a database, merely teaches security, and that a contact list is cached at a client side. Applicants respectfully submit that this is unrelated to the present invention.

At page 4, numbered item 6, the Office Action asserts that Gudjonsson, et al. teaches "reading out the user-status-selection table of a virtual space in which a user terminal participates when the user terminal has participated in a plurality of virtual spaces." Gudjonsson, et al. at col. 3, lines 37-45, col. 11, line 52, and col. 12, lines 55-67 are cited in support of this position. Applicants respectfully disagree. Col. 3, lines 37-45 and col. 11, line 52 of Gudjonsson, et al. teach only that a method for users to provide status notification to each other using a buddy list, and discusses what is included in the buddy list. Further, Gudjonsson, et al. at col. 12, lines 55-67, teaches only a method in which users can provide status notification to each other using a buddy list, and that others are notified of self-status when self-status is set. Applicants respectfully submit that Gudjonsson, et al. fails to teach or suggest that a status selection table associated with a virtual space is read out when a user participates in that virtual space, as in the present invention.

At page 5 of the Office Action, Gudjonsson, et al. is asserted to teach "displaying on the user terminal the list of the selectable user statuses for each virtual space based on the read-out user-status-selection table," and col. 12, lines 5-15, is cited in support of this assertion. Applicants

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respectfully disagree. The cited portion of Gudjonsson, et al. teaches security protocol, and the caching of a contact list at a client side. Applicants respectfully submit that Gudjonsson, et al. fails to teach or suggest a user-status-selection table, as in the present invention.

At page 5 of the Office Action, Gudjonsson, et al. is asserted to teach "setting a user status which was selected from the list of selectable user statuses for each virtual space in which the user has participated." Gudjonsson, et al. at col. 26, lines 30-37 was cited in support of this position. Applicants respectfully submit that the cited portion of Gudjonsson, et al. teaches only that a service at a server side uses/registers a user status. Gudjonsson, et al. fails to teach or suggest a method to register a different status from a different status selection table for each virtual space in which a user has participated.

At page 5 of the Office Action, Gudjonsson, et al. is asserted to teach "sending to each virtual space the set user status, receiving from each virtual space the set user status, and displaying the set user status for each virtual space" at col. 12, lines 5-15. Again, Applicants submit that this cited portion of Gudjonsson, et al. teaches only security protocol and caching a contact list at a client side. Gudjonsson, et al. fails to teach or suggest a status selection table as in the present invention.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Gudjonsson, et al. fails to teach all of the features of amended independent claim 10 and those claims depending directly or indirectly therefrom. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent claim 10, and those claims depending directly or indirectly therefrom, patentably distinguish over the prior art are in condition for allowance.

Further, as claims 11 and 12 have been amended to recite features similar to those of amended independent claim 10, Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent claims 11 and 12, and those claims depending therefrom, patentably distinguish over the prior art for reasons similar to independent claim 10 and, therefore, are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all outstanding objections and rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot. And further, that all pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art. Thus, there being no further outstanding objections or rejections, the application is submitted as being in condition for

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allowance which action is earnestly solicited. At a minimum, this Amendment should be entered at least for purposes of Appeal as it either clarifies and/or narrows the issues for consideration by the Board.

If the Examiner has any remaining issues to be addressed, it is believed that prosecution can be expedited and possibly concluded by the Examiner contacting the undersigned attorney for a telephone interview to discuss any such remaining issues.

If there are any underpayments or overpayments of fees associated with the filing of this Amendment, please charge and/or credit the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

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STAAS & HALSEY

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Date: 12/9/05